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Sister M. Philomene Barsa

In little more than an hour, two of our Sisters this morning answered the call to eternity--Sister M. Philomene at 8:40, and Sister M. Engelbert at 9:50.

Sister Philomene's illness had dated from her surgery at St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago, in November of 1957 for carcinoma of the breast. Metastasis had already set in, but after recuperating in the Infirmary she was able to return to her mission, St. Procopius. After convalescing a year at St. Procop's, Cleveland, and beginning the summer in residence at St. Francis Academy, Sister was taken to the infirmary on June 27, 1959, aware that she could no longer attempt the common life. Her decline was progressive and she was anointed on August 2nd and again on December 14th. Her passing on January 21st was quiet and peaceful. Her niece, Sister M. Ursula, was with her at her death. - Sister was sixty-five years of age.

The former Helen Barsa of Cleveland, Ohio, Sister Philomene had entered the convent in December of 1918 and had pronounced her perpetual vows in August, 1924. All her 37 years of teaching were spent at only two missions. Beginning in 1921 she taught for nine years at St. Procopius, Chicago, grades 2 to 7; then at St. Procop's, Cleveland, she spent eight years in the grades and fifteen in the high school. Her last five years of active duty found her back at St. Procopius, Chicago, serving as Superior and as Principal of both grade and high school. Sisters' final year recuperating in Cleveland completed her mission.

A gentle, kindly, true religious, Sister Philomene met generously all the demands of school and convent life. Calm efficiency stamped her work as teacher, principal, and superior. She loved the classroom and found it a real sacrifice in her sickness to be unable to work with and for 'her boys and girls,' but she accepted the conditions of her decline nobly. She was uncomplaining, patient in suffering, appreciative of even the slightest service. A lover of prayer, she spent much of her time in chapel. She continued to say her office with the Community until the week before her death. Though swallowing grew difficult, she was able to receive Holy Communion daily until the very morning of her death, when the Host became her Viaticum. For this continuing grace in her sickness she was especially thankful, deriving much comfort from the 'coming of the Lord.'

Sister Philomene's funeral was held on Saturday, January 23rd. The Most Rev. Martin D. McNamara presided at the Solemn Requiem Mass assisted by Rev. David Efroymsen and Rev. Roger Kaffer, with Rev. Lloyd Bowden as master of ceremonies. Rev. Angelo Zwiesler, O.F.M., was celebrant; Rev. Benedict McCarthy, O.F.M., and Rev. Alphonse Coan, O.F.M., were deacon and subdeacon. - Father Angelo led the prayers at the grave in Resurrection Cemetery.